

Interpreting the Work Environment Profile

PART A. STAFF’S RATINGS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

This portion of the profile includes a summary of the results to questions pertaining to the ten dimensions of organizational climate. It describes the current organizational climate as measured by staff perceptions along each dimension. To make dimension scores comparable, all scores have been standardized on a common metric. The vertical axis indicates that the lowest possible score for each dimension is 0 and the highest possible score is 10. The vertical line for each dimension indicates the range of scores (low and high) for the participating center. The  symbol shows the average rating of the respondents from the participating center with respect to each dimension. The following table provides the national norms for each dimension based on responses from 3,980 early childhood educators from 363 centers who have completed the *Early Childhood Work Environment Survey*.

Collegiality	6.51		Decision Making	6.37
Professional Growth	4.91		Goal Consensus	6.87
Supervisor Support	7.08		Task Orientation	6.84
Clarity	6.06		Physical Setting	7.04
Reward System	6.00		Innovativeness	6.75

The following provides a fuller explanation of how to interpret the ratings for each dimension.

Collegiality. This dimension measures the extent to which staff are friendly, supportive, and trusting of one another. A high score indicates that staff feel free to express their feelings and believe communication is generally frank and candid. Individuals working at centers with a high rating on the collegiality dimension usually feel that morale is high and that a strong sense of team spirit characterizes work relationships.

Professional Growth. This category measures the extent to which professional growth opportunities are available to staff. Centers that score high on this dimension provide regular staff development workshops, encourage teachers to share resources with one other, provide release time for teachers to attend conferences and visit other schools, and provide financial support and guidance for professional advancement.

Supervisor Support. The collective perception of workers at centers scoring high on this dimension is that the supervision they receive is both supportive and helpful. Individuals who rank supervisor support positively feel that high but reasonable standards are set and that staff are helped to develop their skills. A low rating on this dimension may indicate that the supervisor does not provide enough feedback or that he/she is too critical and hard to please.

Clarity. This dimension refers to the way in which policies, procedures, and responsibilities are defined and carried out. Early childhood workers at centers scoring high on this dimension generally feel that communication is good and that work schedules, job descriptions, and rules are clear and well defined. Low ratings on this dimension indicate that people are often confused about policies and procedures and that conflicting demands are often placed on workers.

Reward System. This dimension measures the extent to which individuals in the setting feel that pay and fringe benefits are fair and equitably distributed. Centers scoring high in this category provide good job security for their workers and handle promotions and raises fairly. Workers in these settings feel that their pay is fair compared to what other early childhood centers pay and that their center is taking steps to improve the overall level of pay and benefits. A low score in this dimension indicates that people may feel that some individuals are paid more than they are worth, that raises are based on favoritism, or that people are taken advantage of.

Decision Making. This dimension refers to the extent to which autonomy is valued and staff are encouraged to make decisions about things that directly affect them. Centers scoring high in this category are those where staff are also encouraged to provide input on schoolwide policies. A low rating on this dimension indicates that the overall perception of workers is that the center values conformity and individuals do not feel free to express their opinions on important issues.

Goal Consensus. The dimension of goal consensus refers to the degree to which the staff agree on school philosophy, are unified in their approach, and are committed to program goals and objectives. A high score in this area reflects the ability of staff to appreciate differing points of view and to be able to compromise or agree on important programmatic issues. A low rating on this dimension indicates a lack of consistency and agreement on key philosophical issues guiding center practices.

Task Orientation. This dimension measures the degree of emphasis placed on good planning, efficiency, getting the job done, and accountability. Workers who rate their center high in this area believe the center puts an appropriate emphasis on results and outcomes, that they work hard but still have time to relax, that program procedures are efficient, and that meetings are productive. Low ratings generally indicate that time is often wasted, things get put off, and people procrastinate getting important tasks done.

Physical Setting. This dimension measures the extent to which staff feel that their work environment is well arranged, organized, and provides sufficient supplies and equipment for them to do their jobs. A low score in this category indicates that the center may appear drab or need major repairs, that the temperature may be too hot or too cold, that parking may be inadequate, that there are limited supplies, or that classroom space is cramped and crowded.

Innovativeness. This final dimension measures the extent to which the center encourages staff to be creative and innovative in their work. Individuals rating their setting high in this area believe that they are encouraged to try out new ideas in solving problems and are supported in implementing needed changes. Programs rating low in this dimension are characterized by an approach that avoids risk and allows many problems to go unaddressed.

PART B. STAFF'S RATINGS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH DIMENSION

People do not all want or expect the same things from their work. For some individuals a sense of collegiality may be quite important and essential for job fulfillment. For others who prefer to work alone, the need for affiliation may be less important. Likewise, for some people, the comfort level of the physical setting and the availability of materials and supplies may be of considerable importance. For others, however, the physical setting may be minimally important.

In completing the ECWES, respondents are asked to place a \surd next to the three dimensions they value most highly in a work setting. The Work Environment Profile summarizes the collective importance that staff have assigned to each of the ten dimensions. It notes the number of employees who indicated a dimension as being one of the three most important to them.

The data summarized in Part B of the Work Environment Profile can guide the center administrator in knowing which dimensions should be given high priority in terms of change. In other words, directors will achieve more lasting results in their school improvement efforts if they focus on those areas that staff rated as low in Part A and valued as high in Part B. Looking at Part A and B together helps staff appreciate the uniqueness of their setting. Part A describes the climate as it is currently perceived; Part B measures the importance attached to each dimension. Taken together, Part A and Part B can help staff understand how the current climate meets expectations in each area. Each center must develop its own formula for achieving a healthy organizational climate; no one prescription applies equally to all settings.

PART C. OVERALL COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION

This scale provides a summary of the staff's overall commitment to the center. Individuals who feel deeply committed to their jobs tend to put extra effort into their work and take pride in their center. This section of the profile can be read like a thermometer. The higher the bar, the stronger the collective commitment of those individuals completing the survey.

PART D. HOW THE CURRENT WORK ENVIRONMENT RESEMBLES THE IDEAL

Satisfaction with one's work environment can also be conceptualized as the discrepancy between *current* working conditions and a perceived *ideal* work environment. Satisfaction is greater when the discrepancy between real and ideal conditions is small. This section of the Work Environment Profile describes the composite employee perceptions of how closely their current work situation resembles their ideal work environment. This is just one additional way to understand how workers perceive their current work conditions.

PART E. RANKING OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

There are many educational goals and objectives that guide curricular policies and procedures in early childhood programs. But the priority that staff assign to different goals may vary from one center to another. This section of the Work Environment Profile details the rank that respondents assigned to six different educational objectives. If goal consensus is high at a center, the rankings for each objective will cluster. If staff have strong differences in the importance of different objectives, however, the rankings will be widely dispersed.

PART F. TEACHERS' DECISION-MAKING INFLUENCE

This section of the Work Environment Profile describes workers' perceptions regarding the degree of influence of teachers with respect to various organizational decisions. It includes both workers' perceptions of the degree of *current* decision-making influence of teachers as well as their perceptions of their *desired* degree of decision-making influence. The data summarized in this section of the profile are useful for understanding some of the different decisions that are typically made in early childhood programs—both those where centralized decision making may be preferred and those where shared decision making may be possible. The appropriate balance will depend on the unique set of circumstances in each program and the amount of influence desired by staff in each area.

PART G. STAFF'S SUMMARY OF THE CENTER AS A PLACE TO WORK

This final section of the profile summarizes the words staff selected to describe the center as a place to work. The number in parentheses next to each word indicates the number of times the word was selected.